No activity, and certainly no field activity, is without risk. Risk management is about maintaining the essential part of an activity while avoiding unacceptable accidents.

These policies are intended to make leaders and participants aware of their respective responsibilities during fieldtrips.

Fieldtrip leaders are responsible for ensuring that appropriate safety precautions are exercised during the course of any fieldtrip and are aware of their health and safety obligations for ongoing risk identification, risk assessment, and risk mitigation,

- they must identify any potential known hazards prior to the fieldtrip, to communicate the existence to participants, and to mitigate the impact to participants.
- must advise participants of the fieldtrip difficulty, duration and the level of “fitness” required when the trip is advertised. Participants should be encouraged to contact the leader if unsure.
- on accepting participants with any handicaps or limitations the fieldtrip management plan must take these into account.
- the terrain, changing weather conditions and the abilities of all participants are to be taken into account prior to and throughout the duration of the fieldtrip.
- postponement, curtailment or cancellation of a trip is the best course in severe weather or adverse physical conditions.
- must carry an appropriately stocked first aid kit relevant to the activity at all times and a cellphone or other form of communication to emergency agencies (eg., satellite phone, mountain radio, VHF radio, EPIRB). At least one person in the party must hold a current first aid certificate
- must warn of potential rock fall hazards and minimise time spent in such areas. Active quarries will require hardhats. Hi-viz vests, or steel-capped shoes may also be required in some situations (eg., drilling rig)

The party leader must appoint a contact person who is not on the trip, to act as a liaison, a person who knows the itinerary and local conditions, and can take responsibility for contacting police if the party is overdue.

For prolonged stops (e.g. longer than 5 minutes) under any “steeper than the angle of repose” or cliff outcrops hardhats are required.

River crossings should be avoided where the current is strong and the water is more than calf deep.

For any field trip that involves coastal or river travel by foot, a 20 m throw rope to be carried.

On bush tracks or in poor visibility leader is to appoint “tail-end Charlie” for the group to ensure it stays close together. Stop and regroup at track junctions or poor sections of tracks where the way forward is unclear and account for all participants.
On long road trips driver fatigue should be closely monitored with regular rest stops and driver changes. Appropriate training to drive 4WD or other specialist vehicles is required if these vehicles are being used.

Roadside and rail track outcrops:
Is the stop justified – i.e. are there other safer alternatives? Factors to be considered are traffic density, visibility, road width, anticipated traffic speed, distance available for drivers to react, and the “value” of the exposure to be viewed.

Railway outcrops:
- Activities along railway lines and inspections of outcrops along the side of railway lines are allowed provided field trip leaders have a permit from the railway authority.
- Permits may be applied for by contacting the Ontrack Local Area Manager within the relevant region.
- Field trip participants must wear hi-visible vests when near railway lines.
- A delegated person, or people, on lookout for trains are recommended.

Roadside stops:

All field trips run by, or on behalf of, the Geological Society of New Zealand, must follow the Transit NZ Code of Practice for Temporary Management Traffic Management. This is relevant at all roadside stops where field trip participants are to be looking at roadside outcrops within the road reserve (regardless of whether they are in the live lane of traffic or not). Field trip leaders should consider carefully whether a stop at a roadside outcrop is necessary. See GSNZ Field Trip Guidelines for Roadside Stops Appendix.

Responsibilities of field trip participants:
- follow the leader’s instructions and directions.
- advise the leader of any medical or physical problems prior to the start of a trip (e.g. allergies, vertigo, agrophobia, lithophobia, malleophobia etc).
- carry any personal medicines you may require (anti-histamines, anti-inflammatories, asthma medication, pain-killers etc). A personal first aid kit is a good idea.
- know your limitations and fitness before undertaking any fieldtrip.
- advising the leader if you want to stop. Leader can then make arrangements to assist them safely back to the starting point, arrange a companion to stay with them or arrange to meet them on the return.
- stay with the group at all times. Short cuts can be dangerous.
- be responsible for taking plenty of fluids, food (including extra energy sources).
- have enough comfortable clothing adequate for any weather changes, suitable footwear and a good raincoat.
- take care in the field such as when hammering rocks, using chisels. Wearing eye protection is recommended.